

Notes From The Underground

A FREE PUBLICATION

TG - WINDS OF CHANGE ARE BLOWING

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President's Note
by Jan Hobbs

I came to my first Gender Mosaic Saturday Social on October 9th, 1999. There I met a woman who kept hounding me all night with the question "Do you know what you are getting into?" Somehow that question still arises to haunt me as I look back on what I have gotten into.

The spring of 2000 saw me being appointed as the Secretary on the Executive of

GM. I started attending the Police Liaison Committee meetings and eventually read a statement into their proceedings, which garnered us a time to make a presentation about who we are. As I researched to prepare for this meeting, I learned so much more about being TG than I thought was possible. June of 2000 we made a long presentation to the Police Liaison Committee, which had a terrific turnout of people from the TG community.

That same year we marched in the Pride Parade during a horrendous rainstorm, which did nothing to dampen our spirits. Christmas of 2000 I organized our party at the Nepean Sportsplex which turned out to be not such a horrendous affair for all.

In February 2001 I became the 2nd Vice-President of GM. Once again we were at Pride 2001 but because I had injured my foot we didn't carry our banner in the parade but we

were present for everything else. Once again I organized our Christmas party but this time at a restaurant downtown, Nick & Jerry's, which saw a large turnout and low a behold we all survived another year.

This being a new year you the members have expressed your confidence in me by nominating and then acclaiming me as the President of Gender Mosaic. So far since February:

I have attended Carleton University's Pride Week Celebration. With Joanne by my side we have spoken at Ottawa University's Pride Week Celebrations about what it means to be Transgendered. I have attended the planning sessions for the proposed new TGLB Community Center.

We have restarted both the Discussion and Couple Group Meetings, which I hope, have great success.

We are preparing to loan some of our vast Library to the Kelly McGinnis Library at the PTS offices. We are busy coming up with fun and interesting topics for our monthly socials.

I am at this writing preparing a document for the Police Liaison Committee to assist them in further understanding our needs.

As you can see I myself have come a long way since that first

meeting in 1999 and I am always impressed as I watch where you have all come from and are going to. Here's hoping that we can look back on this year as a year of accomplishments and successes for Gender Mosaic and all it's members.

Transgendered Stonewall Legend Passes on

Sylvia Rivera, popularly credited as being the instigator of the Stonewall Riots, passed away at approximately 5:00 AM, February 19, 2002, in the intensive care unit of St. Vincent's Hospital in New York's Greenwich Village. She had been in and out of the hospital recently due to cancer of the liver. Both her lover, Julia Murray, and Reverend Pat Bumgardner of the MCC-NY (Metropolitan Community Church-New York), were at her side as she passed on. She was 53.

An internationally recognized pioneer in what became known as the "Gay Rights Movement", Ms. Rivera was one of the collection of drag queens, transsexuals and stone butch lesbians on the scene, June 27, 1969 -- the fateful moment of the Stonewall Riots. Though the uprising is the subject of legend, Sylvia Rivera's name was always synonymous with the catalytic moment that became history. On an annual

basis, she was requested across the country, and across the globe, to recount the historic incident in first-person detail.

One misconception that persisted throughout was that Ms. Rivera was the first to throw a 'stone' or 'brick' at Stonewall. In actuality, it was Molotov cocktails that were thrown which began the ebb and flow of protester vs. police conflicts. Another misconception that Sylvia was quick to point out was that she did not throw the first Molotov cocktail, but the second one instead. An unidentified "queen" threw the first who it

Yet another popular misconception is that police frisked and arrested the 'queens' from inside the Stonewall Bar. In actuality, Stonewall was strictly for gay men -- the transsexuals, queens and butches were relegated to the streets outside. When police began hauling the arrested patrons outside, the collected group began verbally challenging the arresting officers - some throwing coins (not rocks).

In 1970, less than a year after the infamous Stonewall Riots, Sylvia Rivera joined forces with another Stonewall veteran, the late Marsha P. Johnson, to form the group Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR).

Later renamed Street Transgender Action Revolutionaries, STAR and Sylvia Rivera worked tirelessly for the civil rights of transgendered and other queer people.

Across the country and around the globe, she was frequently called on to address audiences of rising activists and advocates. Sylvia's firebrand demeanor was world-renowned and instrumental in galvanizing the transgender community to fight to further the cause of justice for all.

Rivera was involved in the struggle for human rights until the moment of her death.

Last year, Rivera resurrected STAR in response to the high-profile murder of transsexual prostitute, Amanda Milan. Ms Rivera herself was the spearhead of both the vigil immediately following Milan's death, and another awareness vigil before the beginning of the murder trial of Milan's killers.

Recently, just out of the hospital, Sylvia participated in the lobbying effort to include gender identity in New York State's pending SONDA (Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act) legislation. She challenged the lead organization, ESPA

(Empire State Pride Agenda) to push for revised wording to expand the coverage to transgenders.

Rivera met with the leadership of the Empire State Pride Agenda in her hospital room just hours before her death, presenting issues of concern to the Transgender Community and negotiating for greater support from ESPA. She left the national GLBT community as she had begun: a true and outspoken activist who was totally committed, and who never knew the word "quit."

"I am truly saddened by Sylvia's death," said Yoseñio Lewis, Board Chair of NTAC (the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition). Lewis, on business in Washington DC, described Ms. Rivera as one who "provided unending inspiration and motivation to countless people through her passion and unwillingness to settle for anything less than total equality for everyone."

"I know I am a better person ... for having been challenged by her and for having taken on some of her fighting spirit."

"Sylvia was beloved by many people" added local New York activist, Rusty Moore. "We shall not see her like again."

Arrangements for a service at

New York's MCC are pending. For information contact the church at 212-629-7440 (www.mccny.org), or Transy House at 718-832-1080 (www.transyhouse.org). STAR's website can be found at www.geocities.com/catskillmarina/index.html

Boarder Crossing & Air Travel Post 911 by Laura Murphy

Advice from International Foundation for Gender Education and other TG groups is that people should only cross borders and/or fly on any airline, regardless of which carrier, dressed to match their passport photo or ID.

I have a pre-op TS client who flies regularly. But all her ID and passport photos match her femme presentation. The only indication on her documents that she is not a woman is an M on her documents and that has not presented any problems in the post-Sept. 11 world.

In the past I have flown dressed as a woman but am no longer doing that.

I am not at this point using United. But frankly, I don't believe any airlines have a good record on tolerance of anyone who raises even the slightest suspicion since Sept. 11.

A Place to Call Our Own by Joanne Law

Some of you might know that there is a community-based organization wishing to build a new community resource centre here in Ottawa, for the transgender, lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. In the last four years the city of Ottawa and the GLBT community have developed a liaison with the City of Ottawa. On July 6, 2001, Mayor Bob Charelli and several Councilors met with about 70 community leaders and volunteers for a town hall meeting at City Hall. Following that meeting and with the encouragement of the Mayor and Councilors, the Ottawa GLBT Community Centre Task Group was created to facilitate the establishment of a community centre.

A lot of dedicated volunteers have already spent days, weeks and months trying to develop a direction and strategy for this new resource centre. On March 10th members of the GLBT community met at Pink Triangle Services for a briefing with a city planner of the Community Design and Environment Division, City of Ottawa Development Services Department. This centre will be a place where resources, services, meeting room's, multi use space etc. will be run and controlled by the GLBT

community. A recent report of the Ottawa GLBT Wellness Project indicates that there are broad un-met needs within the GLBT community particularly for youth, transgender and aging populations. In respect to the creation of a community centre is a logical next step flowing from the important and successful community-driven work of the Wellness Project.

Imagine volunteering your services dressed in the identity that you always wished for, no questions asked. If you have any specialized talent or just want to volunteer for any task, let me know or e-mail glbtottawacentre@sympatico.ca for more information the web site is www.glbtottawacentre.com. Become a volunteer, someone needs you. Thanks for your support.

If You Are on Hormones How to Perform a Breast Self-examination (Bse) Canadian Breast Cancer Society

Breast self-examination is a procedure performed by an individual to physically and visually examine herself for any changes in the breasts and underarm areas of the body. It has not shown that BSE alone can accurately determine the presence of breast cancer. Therefore, BSE should not be used in place of, but in addition

to, clinical breast examination and mammography.

When should BSE be done?

By doing BSE regularly, you get to know how your breasts normally feel so that you are more apt to detect any change.

Women should begin practising breast self-examination by age 20 and continue the practice throughout their lives -- even during pregnancy and after menopause.

Breast self-examination (BSE) should be performed every month. Become familiar with how your breasts usually look and feel so that you may notice any change from what is normal for you.

If you still menstruate, the best time to do BSE is several days, or about a week, after your period ends. These are the days when your breasts are least likely to be tender or swollen.

If you no longer menstruate, pick a certain day -- such as the first day of each month -- to remind yourself to do BSE.

If you are taking hormones, talk with your physician about when to do BSE.

Changes to be aware of:

Check with your physician if

you find any change in your breast(s) that causes you concern. Changes in your breasts may include: development of a lump a discharge other than breast milk swelling of the breast skin irritation or dimpling nipple abnormalities (such as pain, redness, scaliness, turning inward)

How to do BSE:

1. Stand in front of a mirror that is large enough for you to see your breasts clearly. Check each breast for anything unusual. Check the skin for puckering, dimpling, or scaliness. Look for a discharge from the nipples.

2. Watching closely in the mirror, clasp your hands behind your head and press your hands forward.

3. Next, press your hands firmly on your hips and bend slightly toward the mirror as you pull your shoulders and elbows forward.

Do steps 2 and 3 to check for any change in the shape or contour of your breasts. As you do these steps, you should feel your chest muscles tighten.

4. Gently squeeze each nipple and look for a discharge.

5. Raise one arm. Use the pads of the fingers of your other hand to check the breast and the

surrounding area firmly, carefully, and thoroughly. Some women like to use lotion or powder to help their fingers glide easily over the skin. Feel for any unusual lump or mass under the skin. Feel the tissue by pressing your fingers in small, overlapping areas about the size of a dime. To be sure you cover your whole breast, take your time and follow a definite pattern: lines, circles, or wedges.

Some research suggests that many women do BSE more thoroughly when they use a pattern of up-and-down lines or strips. Other women feel more comfortable with another pattern. The important thing is to cover the whole breast and to pay special attention to the area between the breast and the underarm, including the underarm itself. Check the area above the breast, up to the collarbone and all the way over to your shoulder.

Lines: Start in the underarm area and move your fingers downward little by little until they are below the breast. Then move your fingers slightly toward the middle and slowly move back up. Go up and down until you cover the whole area.

Circles: Beginning at the outer edge of your breast, move your fingers slowly around the whole breast in a circle. Move around

the breast in smaller and smaller circles, gradually working toward the nipple. Don't forget to check the underarm and upper chest areas, too.

Wedges: Starting at the outer edge of the breast, move your fingers toward the nipple and back to the edge. Check your whole breast, covering one small wedge-shaped section at a time. Be sure to check the underarm area and the upper chest.

6. It is important to repeat step 5 while you are lying down. Lie flat on your back, with one arm over your head and a pillow or folded towel under the shoulder. This position flattens the breast and makes it easier to check.

Check each breast and the area around it very carefully using one of the patterns described above.

7. Some women repeat step 5 in the shower. Your fingers will glide easily over soapy skin, so you can concentrate on feeling for changes underneath.

What do you do if you find a lump?

One of the most frightening moments for a woman is if she feels something different or unusual while performing breast self-examination. One of the most important reasons to

perform regular breast self-examination is so that you know what is normal for your breasts. If you find a lump, it is important not to panic.

If you discover a lump in one breast or feel something "different" in the tissue, examine the same spot in the opposite breast. Usually if the same area in the opposite breast feels the same there is little need for worry.

However, if they feel different, or you feel a definite lump, there may be valid reason for concern and it is important to contact your physician right away.

Sometimes the lumpiness may be due to menstrual changes, however if you have nipple discharge or skin changes such as dimpling or puckering, your physician may want to see you right away.

It is natural to be frightened when discovering a lump, but do not let the prospect of cancer delay you from taking action. Remember that 80 percent of all breast lumps are benign (non-cancerous).

Acknowledging Value

Lynn Lefevre

By Joanne Law

Many people in the transgender community have either met or

know Lynn Lefevre. I have seen her develop into a very caring and wonderful person. She has done wonders for others who have read her diaries about her new life, her surgery and her development into a new world. This time I want to thank Lynn for her generous and timely contribution to the Gender Mosaic web site, www.geocities.com/gender_mosaic. Being a computer misfit myself, I know it takes a computer genius to do what she did. Scanning, linking, adding new information, keeping tabs on what's new, writing e-mails to lost souls, just being there when others needed you. Lynn, I know that you want to take a rest and look into the future so on behalf of all the transgender community and myself, Thank You ever so much for your help, your unselfish dedication and being my friend. Good luck and may God bless you.

Editor's Note

by Margo Ross

You will notice a change in our format for the newsletter in that we will continue to focus on local issues and achievements and identify our communities heros, leaders and friends. We will also increase our awareness of national and international concerns as they affect our lives and legal rights.

I would like to take this

opportunity to commend two of our members Zelda and Melanie who over the last three months have advanced the cause of TG rights and recognition through their individual assertions. The fact is in each of their cases, they refused to sit by and have the reality of being transgendered dismissed or relegated to some even greater minority status or worst to be told it was just a your personal "lifestyle choice."

Well this is not a lifestyle, it is who and what we intrinsically are. Now WWF or politics those are lifestyles choices and we certainly could question the rational for such a decision. What happened, others had to take notice, even more got involved and advocated on their and your behalf. SO WHAT!

It is a very big deal, because as long as we remain "closeted" either actually or mentally then we do not exist. As such we authorize the very behaviours that we object to. So stand up and raise a toast to two individual efforts among a sea of efforts as we build and maintain a strong wind of change for our community and those of our friends, family and children.

Way to go girls!

Rock City Women's Fest 2002, August 16-18

This year again Rock City Women's Fest welcome the transgendered community to fully participate in the weekends events, camping, concerts and workshops.

Here is a great opportunity to come out participate, volunteer and have a great time, no excuses as you can get a weekend pass for just \$40.00 from April 1 to May 1 at Wilde's, Venus Envvy and Margo then \$60 after that May 1, 2002.

Rainbow Youth Initiatives

March 21, 2002, At the Arts Court in downtown Ottawa during one of Ottawa biggest snowstorms of the winter. The weather didn't stop the 70 invited gusts and community leaders from attending this reception. What I am talking about is the launch of Ottawa first website for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Two-Spirit, Transgender and those questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. The Rainbow Youth Advisory Committee (RYAC) Is a group of youth who advise the Youth Service Bureau on the gaps in services to the GLBTT youth. www.rainbowyouthtalk.com is a resource and information website so that youth can find

GLBTT info, definitions, symbols, links, religion, coming out, recommended books, legal help, sexuality and relationships and much more. This website provides a safe and anonymous way for youth to learn about themselves, issues they face and the GLBTT community at large. One of the 6 key persons who helped in the building of this website is my hero Melanie. You may know her as our transgender youth liaison to the community. During the screening of the website when the words sexual identity appeared the words gender identity followed. Six dedicated youth have worked for two years to make this site what it is. One of the sponsors of this site is none other than the United Way and YSB. Ottawa is becoming a metropolis of events for the GLBTT communities. Some of the links are in construction but only a few. Take a look and see for yourself. Until next time Joanne

New Tool for Transgender Advocacy

Handbook by Ngltf Policy Institute, NCLR, Breaks New Ground for Transgender Rights

June 19, 2000 - The Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) and the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) today released the

nation's first comprehensive organizing manual designed to educate policymakers about transgender issues and to provide model strategies for activists seeking an end to discrimination against transgendered people.

The publication, "Transgender Equality: A Handbook for Activists and Policymakers," reviews some 25 years of transgender advocacy and was co-authored by national leaders in transgender activism: City University of New York Associate Professor Paisley Currah and NCLR Senior Staff Attorney Shannon Minter, with an introduction by Jamison Green, past president of FTM International and current board chair of Gender Education and Advocacy, Inc.

"'Transgender Equality' is a powerful educational tool that marks a turning point for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender movement," said NGLTF Executive Director Elizabeth Toledo. "This book works toward breaking down the barriers that have divided our movement for decades. It empowers all of us - not only transgendered people, but also gay, lesbian, and bisexual people and allies - to advocate effectively for inclusive equality in our communities and workplaces."

Through 27 personal stories and case studies, *Transgender Equality* defines and describes transgender terms and issues; discusses the ways sexual orientation and gender identity overlap and differ; examines the role of gender variance in homophobia and anti-gay violence; provides information on efforts to achieve basic legal protections for transgendered people; and suggests strategies for advancing inclusive anti-discrimination, safe schools, and hate-crimes legislation.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the book is its demonstration of how the fear that including transgendered people "will kill the bill" is almost always exaggerated and based far more on unfounded speculation than on a realistic assessment of what is possible. In fact, anti-discrimination laws that include "gender identity" have begun to blossom nationwide: from 4 cities with nondiscrimination laws that cover transgendered people in 1990 to 4 states, 3 counties, and at least 20 additional cities in 2000.

Additionally courts have seen a new wave of civil rights litigation brought forward by transgender plaintiffs. By March 2000, 3.8 percent of Americans lived in jurisdictions with laws that address gender variant people, the report finds.

Despite such dramatic advances, however, transgendered activists often find themselves struggling for a voice in the fight for equality. "Policy and legislative issues affecting gender variant people are too often ignored," said NCLR Executive Director Kate Kendell. "NCLR is committed to ending the isolation of the transgendered community, and this publication represents a major bridge between the lesbian and feminist communities and the transgendered political movement."

In the book, authors Minter and Currah point out that between 1996 and 1999, 31 jurisdictions passed laws prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, but that only six of those laws included provisions for transgendered people.

Transgender Equality provides examples of successful legal language, offers talking points to assist efforts to educate both the public and policymakers about issues important to the transgender community, and discusses strategies to achieve transgender equality in workplaces and educational institutions.

In 1997, NGLTF became the first national gay and lesbian organization to amend its

mission statement to include bisexual and transgendered people. One year later it became the first national GLBT organization to bring a transgendered person onto its board of directors.

The handbook is available free of charge from NGLTF online in the Library + Publications section at <http://www.nglftf.org> or for \$10 by ordering online or calling (202) 332-6483, ext. 3205.

The National Center for Lesbian Rights is the nation's legal center with a primary commitment to advancing the rights and safety of lesbians and their families through a program of litigation, public policy advocacy, free legal advice and counselling, and public education. In addition, NCLR provides representation and resources to gay men and bisexual and transgendered individuals on key issues that also significantly advance lesbian rights.

Gender by Kait Acres

The development of a human being in a mother's womb is a wondrous thing. Not only do the cells grow and multiply to form an incredibly complex biological entity, but by some incredible manner becomes a

recognizable human infant having arms legs fingers etc. plus all of the internal organs required to be a living person. If that isn't enough of a miracle the tiny person who enters into the world comes with a selection of personal characteristics. The infant is born with unique capabilities for music, or not, athletic ability - greater or little, an aptitude for mathematics and science, or not, artistic ability, or not. The child will be most adept with the right hand or with the left hand. All of this before any nurturing, training or conditioning starts to take place. Incredible!

It is interesting that all of this diversity is accepted by society without question. There are no academic studies done (that I know of) to determine why a child has an aptitude for music rather than hockey. It's just the way the child is. The father may be disappointed that his son is not going to be a hockey player but I doubt that any father would send his young son to a psychiatrist to try to effect a cure. If the father did so, society would think the father is nuts not the child.

It is true that there was once a time when left handed people were considered evil and even burned. We have grown out of that mind set for the most part. However a short while ago I was talking to a man in his early

30s who said he was not forced to write "right handed" at school - but while all the other students received help- he did not. Prejudices and taboos die hard.

Considering all of the diversity society accepts, and sometimes celebrates, in the characteristics of our fellow humans one has to wonder why the same diversity is not accepted, and celebrated when it comes to gender. Our sense of self is just one of many formed as we developed in our mothers womb. We have no problem waiting to see if a child has an aptitude for science or the arts. Why can we not wait a while to discover whether the child will develop a masculine or feminine personality and celebrate what ever is realized.

Perhaps if society could look at gender in a much larger context society would follow the same path as it has about "left handedness". It's no big deal. Let the child become the mature person that was formed in the womb.

Time to Remember In Loving Memory

On Saturday April 6th Janis Macfarlan passed on. Janis was one of the first transsexuals to have SRS almost 30 years ago. She was a voice of hope to many transsexuals that were having SRS back

then, she was also one of the original drag queens in Ottawa and Montreal and her legacy will be forever. I new Janis for almost 15 years and she became a friend, she talked about her life in living color and her history of doing drag and her life as a woman. She opened many establishments doing what she knew best along with her friends in the drag community. She will be missed

There will be a memorial service for her this Saturday April 13th at Kelly Funeral Home on Somerset St. W. at 7:00pm. During the day the visiting times are from 2:00pm to 7:00pm.

Please pass this message on to another list that you may be on.
Thank You. Joanne Law

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Gender Mosaic's 15 year anniversary

Yes it is true,
2003 will make a great mile stone in the history of our group and the transgender community in Canada.

Your executive would like your thoughts and ideas as to how we could best celebrate this even and who we should have there, where it could be held when should it be held.

It is a great time to dig deep into your photos, and written exchanges to help us create a living history of the group, its members and accomplishment so start thinking and most of all be prepared to get involved.

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IT IS Your Mail Box TO

The Gender Mosaic, PO Box 7421, Vanier Ontario. K1L 8E4 can be used by all members for their packages, delivery of books or magazines.

We will pick them up and get them to you some way. Just let me know. Thanks Jan
770-1945

Upcoming Events

-Members Discussion Group & Couples Group get in touch with your executive for more info or see you at the regular monthly meetings

UP COMING MEETINGS

Ottawa Police Liaison Committee

The Rainbow Youth Advisory Committee (RYAC)

GLBT Community Centre Development working group
For information, contact:
Stephanie Power tel:
613-277-8873,
e-mail: spower@frey.ca or
Joanne Law

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